

planBTV South End Revisions
Neighborhood Parks & Open Spaces Element
Staff Revisions for LRPC Meeting 05/17/2016

Neighborhood parks and open spaces

The South End has fabulous open spaces. From its waterfront amenities including beaches, Oakledge Park, and the Island Line Trail to Calahan Park, South Enders frequently visit their neighborhood parks and open spaces. But some of these destinations can feel tucked away, hard to get to, or—like the Barge Canal site—ill-equipped for public use. There are opportunities for additional parks and public places in the South End, and for better connecting and utilizing the neighborhood’s existing amenities. Improvements and additions to the current stock of open spaces will not only continue to support this lively neighborhood, but will help advance some other important planBTV South End goals for stormwater management and reimagining brownfield sites, and will be guided by the recommendations from the City’s first-ever Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Master Plan.

planBTV South End outlines a strategy to:

- Create new parks and public spaces and enhance current open spaces to meet more needs of the neighborhood
- Increase connectivity to neighborhood open spaces

Strategies

Create and enhance neighborhood public spaces

planBTV South End calls for new or improved parks and public spaces to serve this nature and city loving neighborhood. Together, they’ll equip the South End with a new urban wild, and will bring the creativity and spirit of the South End to the street. They’ll help energize Pine Street, provide new places for events and happenings and better connect the diversity of neighborhood resources.

Establish the Barge Canal Park, transforming the Barge Canal Superfund site into a publicly accessible urban wild—an open space destination for passive recreation uses which celebrates the industrial heritage and educates the community on the ecological sensitivity of the site. Any recreational use of this site should be designed with the site’s history and ecological constraints as guiding principals and could potentially incorporating interpretive signage, art and trails. Trails within the site may need to be constructed as boardwalks in order to minimize any impact on the site.

- Utilize the Brownfields Area Wide Plan for step-by-step guidance on how to pursue the reuse of the Barge Canal as a publicly-accessible open space; Utilize the Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Master Plan for guiding principles for park design
- Community & Economic Development Office; Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department; Planning & Zoning Department

Explore potential for a new public waterfront park and expanded waterfront bike path at the Blodgett site. As plans for the reuse of the site evolve, work with the property owner to identify opportunities for part of the site to be utilized for a public park and/or for an extension of the bike path along the waterfront between the Barge Canal and Lakeside neighborhood.

- Work with the property owner to identify opportunities for public access to the Blodgett beach.
- Community & Economic Development Office; Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department; Property Owner

Create a Linear Arts Park along Pine Street, featuring interactive sculptures, murals, creative use of landscaping and more, both along the street edge and in front of Pine Street buildings. Utilize this as an opportunity to increase neighborhood green space, reinforce the character of the South End, and as an important piece of an innovative, connected stormwater management system.

- Develop a Linear Art Park Implementation Plan a segment of Pine Street that identifies locations for installations, establishes a process and criteria for selecting/commissioning work, identifies potential funding sources, and engages local property owners and artists in shaping this initiative.
- Burlington City Arts, South End Arts & Business Association, Department of Public Works

Incorporate pocket parks, plazas and other open spaces into new developments in the Lakeside Ave area. As sites redevelop and a greater critical mass of innovative business activity is taking place in this area, these spaces will encourage collaboration and connection. They be designed to accommodate events or informal use, can showcase innovations in tech, art and other maker industries, and can double as stormwater management elements utilizing best management practices.

- Encourage property owners/developers to incorporate pocket parks, plazas and other open spaces that will reinforce the feeling of an innovation district in the South End.
- Department of Planning & Zoning; Public Works Department, Burlington City Arts; Property Owners

Explore the potential for a South End Community Center providing indoor recreation opportunities and neighborhood gathering spaces, potentially as an addition to the Champlain School. In addition to recreational and community uses, this space could also be used to advance Economic Development goals by hosting continuing education and workforce development programs.

- Continue to explore potential for a South End community center
- Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department; Community & Economic Development Office; Burlington School District

Increase connectivity to neighborhood open spaces

Getting to parks and public spaces on foot or via bike should be safe and easy! In addition to providing transportation choices to South End residents, new and improved biking and walking connections will make it easier to enjoy the neighborhood's diversity of open spaces.

Create a new entrance to Calahan Park along Pine Street, improving access and opening up the Park's activity on a less-than-exciting stretch of Pine Street. This offers an opportunity to better connect the neighborhood's resources along a more walkable, bikeable Pine Street.

- Identify opportunities for an additional entrance to the park from Pine Street.
- Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department; Public Works Department

Address weak and missing links in the sidewalk network that connect residents to open spaces.

Lack of sidewalks along parts of Lakeside Avenue and Pine Street, most of Industrial Parkway, and all of Sears Lane can make routes to South End open spaces less than welcoming for those arriving on foot. Better sidewalk conditions with green buffers are needed along Flynn Ave, Home Ave south of Batchelder Street, and along Pine Street between Calahan Park and Champlain School.

- Explore ways to advance planBTV South End's Connectivity & Mobility recommendations. Secure funding to implement important links.
- Department of Public Works; Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department

Seek opportunities to create new ped/bike links from Pine Street to Lake Champlain as part of the Barge Canal park. Opportunities for better connections to the Lake are highly desired by neighborhood residents. Within the Barge Canal Site, establish paths as elevated boardwalks if needed due to ecological constraints of the site.

- Utilize the Brownfields Area Wide Plan for step-by-step guidance on how to pursue the reuse of the Barge Canal as a publicly-accessible open space
- Public Works Department; Community & Economic Development Office; Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department